



Coastal Counties Restoration Initiative Request for Proposals

The [National Association of Counties](http://www.naco.org) (NACo) in partnership with the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's \(NOAA\) Community-Based Restoration Program \(CRP\)](http://www.noaa.gov), is pleased to announce the second year of funding for the *Coastal Counties Restoration Initiative (CCRI)*. The newly revamped initiative targets restoration in coastal streams and rivers, estuaries and other marine areas that will improve habitat for NOAA trust resources¹. CCRI provides financial assistance on a competitive basis to innovative, high quality county-led or supported initiatives.

Grants that are community-based in nature and willing to work in partnership with NOAA will be given special consideration, as NOAA's Community-based Restoration Program is providing major financial support for this partnership. A priority area for CCRI is the removal of fish passage barriers in coastal streams and rivers. Grants will range from \$50,000-\$100,000, based upon need. Approximately \$500,000 is expected to be available for CCRI projects in 2008.

The *Coastal Counties Restoration Initiative* seeks to:

- Encourage innovative, **county** projects that restore important marine and coastal habitats and living resources;
- Develop the capacity of county governments, citizens groups and other organizations to conduct **community-based** restoration that will enhance local watershed-based resource management and promote stewardship.

Applicant Eligibility

NACo member counties (visit www.naco.org and click on "About Counties" to determine membership) and organizations working in partnership with a NACo member county are eligible for funding. See NACo's CCRI Map for more eligibility information. All applicants must include a **letter of support** from their chief elected county official. Non-county organizations include non-profit organizations, private agencies, and public institutions such as departments, townships, cities, villages, boroughs, conservation districts, planning districts, utility districts, or other units of local government. Non-county applicants should ensure that the letter demonstrates a substantial county partnership in the project.

Projects of interest may include but are not limited to:

1. Fish Passage Barrier Removal Projects

- The removal of fish passage barriers will be a priority for CCRI. Such projects will be focused on the removal of small dams and other migration barriers (such as road culverts) to diadromous fish. The goal of these projects is to provide for open rivers through NOAA's Open Rivers Initiative (ORI). http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration/projects_programs/crp/partners_funding/backgroundondamremoval.htm. Projects are expected to improve populations of NOAA trust resources (such as striped bass, Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon, Atlantic and Pacific salmon, American eel, American shad, blueback herring, and alewife), provide an economic boost for communities, and enhance public safety.

Geography of Eligible Fish Barrier Removal Projects: Projects in the Northeast (ME, NH, VT, MA, CT, RI), Mid-Atlantic (NY, NJ, PA, DE, VA, MD, DC), Northwest (AK, WA, OR, ID), and California are priority areas for this project type. *Barrier removal projects within the Great Lakes states will NOT be a priority for these funds.*

2. Other Community-Based Habitat Restoration Projects

- Establishment of riparian buffer zones and improvement of freshwater habitat features in watersheds that support diadromous fish.
- Enhancement of feeding, spawning, and growth areas essential to marine or diadromous fish, including degraded areas that historically were important habitat for living marine resources, and through the restoration of which would support these resources again.
- Exclusionary fencing and riparian planting
- Invasive species removal and native vegetation planting
- Planting of native coastal wetland and submerged aquatic vegetation
- Improvement of coastal wetland tidal exchange or reestablishment of historic hydrology.
- Reef/substrate/habitat creation, such as oyster reef construction/ enhancement.
- Removal of marine debris such as derelict fishing nets, abandoned crab pots or other debris caused by a natural disaster that may be of harm to marine habitat.
- Improvement or reestablishment of fish passage through weirs or fish ladders.
- Promotion of "hands-on" educational activities and volunteer stewardship activities in coordination with restoration efforts.

Geography of Other Eligible Marine Habitat Restoration Projects: All projects that benefit NOAA trust resources are eligible. Therefore, projects with NOAA trust resources that are linked to the Atlantic Ocean, the Pacific Ocean, the Gulf of Mexico and the Great Lakes are eligible. NOAA trust resources can often be found far inland of the actual "coastline" with NOAA trust resources found even in streams and rivers in states such as Idaho. Please see the CCRI eligibility map which includes counties that may have NOAA trust resources within them.

Grant Guidelines

All proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria. Qualified projects that meet the criteria described below will be considered and funded based upon grant money available and the level of competition.

- **Level of County Involvement** – (To what extent is the county involved in this project? Is this project linked to the county's written priorities - e.g. Comprehensive plan, Ordinance, etc.? To what extent does the county letter of support demonstrate that the project is a county priority?)
- **Number of Contributing Partners** (To what extent does the project have significant community support as demonstrated by a diversity of active, contributing partners?)
- **Outreach/Community Involvement** (To what extent does the project involve public outreach and participation, and seek to disseminate information on project goals, results, project partners and the sources of funding and other support provided, or otherwise compliment or encourage other local restoration or conservation activities?)
- **Long-Term Stewardship** (How great is the potential of the project to foster long-term stewardship and generate a community conservation ethic through citizen involvement, such as hands-on participation in restoration or science-based monitoring activities undertaken by volunteers or work crews)
- **Conservation of NOAA Trust Resources** – (How great is the potential to restore, protect, conserve or enhance habitat for NOAA trust resources, resulting in direct ecological benefits or otherwise maximizing benefits for living marine resources?)
- **Extent of On-The-Ground Restoration** – (To what extent is the project expected to deliver specific, tangible results that tie back to relevant performance measures (e.g. acres, stream miles, volunteer hours, etc.?)
- **Watershed or County Conservation Plan** (To what extent is the project a regional/local priority based upon specific species population recovery planning goals or on publicly vetted restoration plans, county conservation plans, watershed assessments, or other priority setting planning documents?)
- **Clear Project Description and Work Plan** (To what extent does the proposal describe the restoration objective and provide a realistic implementation plan achievable within 24 months?)
- **Long Term Success/Lasting Benefits** (To what degree has the landowner provided assurance of support and dedication to protecting the project? To what degree has the applicant chosen self-sustaining restoration technique(s) or ensured a long term maintenance plan?)
- **Experience/expertise of principal investigator and organization in performing project** (To what degree does the applicant appear to have the proven or potential capacity to conduct the scope and scale of

the proposed project, as evidenced by project leaders with appropriate administrative qualifications and technical experience or access to necessary administrative qualifications and technical expertise?)

- **Reasonableness of budget** (To what extent is the proposed budget realistic, based on the applicant's stated objectives and time frame?)
- **Ratio of matching funds** (Does the proposed match meet the suggested 1:1 level or is there a higher degree of overall leverage of NOAA funds anticipated, and is any part of the contribution confirmed)
- **Cost Effectiveness / Immediacy of Need** (To what extent is the proposed budget cost-effective, shown by directing the majority of funds, including funds for salaries, to on-the-ground restoration and actual project implementation, compared to the percentage used for general program support including administration, overhead and non-essential travel? To what degree has the proponent demonstrated a strong need for NOAA funds or support?)

Permit Guidelines

- It is very important that applicants provide sufficient documentation that, if appropriate, you are pursuing, expect to receive or have received all necessary permits and clearances for your project to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Endangered Species Act (ESA), and any other relevant Federal, State, or local regulations or ordinances. Please note that NOAA technical advisors are excellent sources of information if you have any questions about required permits.
- NOAA has provided specific guidance with respect to NEPA at <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/>. NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts of proposed projects, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which receive federal funding. To aid in NEPA analysis, applicants should provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g. the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, and aquaculture projects). Representatives of NOAA may contact applicants to gather more information about the project, and applicants may also be requested to assist the agency in drafting an environmental assessment, if the agency determines an assessment is required. **Prior to the release of grant funds, NOAA's NEPA requirements must be satisfied.**

Safety

NACo will ensure that projects have a safety management plan. Therefore, each awarded project will have to verify by signing their grant agreement that they have a safety management plan. The plan must ensure that all grantees conduct a safety briefing immediately prior to restoration activities and for all volunteers and/or staff and sign a liability release prior to their involvement in outdoor and/or risk prone restoration activities.

Monitoring and Reporting

All applicants should propose quantitative, science-based restoration monitoring. NOAA, per the Estuary Restoration Act of 2000, supports the development of monitoring plans that include one structural and one functional monitoring parameter. Applicants are encouraged to contact NOAA CRP staff or use Restoration Monitoring Planner <http://habitat.noaa.gov/restoration/rmp/> when developing monitoring plans.

Successful applicants will be required to report semi-annually using the NOAA Community-based Restoration Program (CRP) Progress Report form. Additional information regarding monitoring and reporting is available http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration/projects_programs/crp/partners_funding/project_reports.html.

Restrictions

Grant funds *cannot* be used for political advocacy, lobbying, litigation or mitigation projects, construction contingencies, clothing, food, or fundraising.

Application Process and Format

Applications are submitted through NACo's online application process. The Application is only available online at <http://www.naco.org/ccriapplication>. All applicants must attach a **letter of support** from their chief elected county official through the online application. Applicants may also attach other supporting documents such as maps,

designs, letters of support, or other pertinent documents. No more than six additional pages may be attached and must also be done through the online form.

When Are Proposals Due?

Application Due: **March 24, 2008**, Award announcements anticipated by: June 15, 2008

Who may I contact with questions?

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1. NOAA trust resources include marine, estuarine, and diadromous fish habitat in coastal streams and rivers. "Diadromous" fish migrate between freshwater and saltwater during their life cycle (e.g. American Eel and salmon). See Figure 1 for a map of counties that may be eligible for funding.